

Cal. May he have as many years on the field as our "iron man," Senator STROM THURMOND, has had in the Senate. He could run that record way up there.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I mention as an aside and not part of the statement that my colleague from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI, is calling me every 5 minutes, 10 minutes. We are going to try to arrange so that the people who want to be at that game can catch the 5:30 train.

There are Members of the Senate and others who want to attend that game, so we are trying to work out some agreement for the Democratic leader where either we could have debate on welfare reform for those who would be watching it on television, or maybe take up a nomination that has been pending for some time and some of my colleagues on the other side would like to take up. I thank the managers.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

Mr. DOLE. Under a previous order, we had agreed to stand in recess between the hours of 1 o'clock and 2 o'clock so that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle might have an opportunity to discuss welfare reform. I am advised there are no speakers and no speakers asking for recognition between now and 1 o'clock. Rather than sit in a quorum call, I suggest we now recess until 2 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:00 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. GRAMS).

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY ACT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, it is with enthusiasm I rise to support the Democratic alternative on welfare reform. I support it with enthusiasm because it is firm on work, provides a safety net for children, brings men back into the picture in terms of child support and child rearing, and at the same time provides State flexibility and administrative simplification.

Mr. President, I am the Senate's only professionally trained social worker.

Before elected to public office, my life's work was moving people from welfare to work, one step at a time, each step leading to the next step, practicing the principles of tough love.

This is the eighth version of welfare reform that I have been through as a foster care worker, as a child abuse and neglect worker, a city councilwoman, Congresswoman, and now U.S. Senator. Each of those previous efforts in times have failed both under Democratic Presidents and under Republican Presidents. It failed for two reasons. One, each reform effort was based on old economic realities, and, second, reform did not provide tools for the people to move from welfare to work, to help them get off welfare and stay off welfare.

I believe that welfare should be not a way of life but a way to a better life. Everyone agrees that today's welfare system is a mess. The people who are on welfare say it is a mess. The people who pay for welfare say it is a mess. It is time we fix the system.

Middle-class Americans want the poor to work as hard at getting off welfare as they themselves do at staying middle class. The American people want real reform that promotes work, two-parent families, and personal responsibility.

That is what the Democratic alternative is all about. We give help to those who practice self-help. Democrats have been the party of sweat equity and have a real plan for work. Republicans have a plan that only talks about work and can not really achieve it.

Democrats have produced a welfare plan that is about real work, and we call it Work First because it does put work first. But it does not make children second class. Under our plan, from the day someone comes into a welfare office, they must focus on getting a job and keeping a job and being able to raise their family.

How do we do this? Well, first, we abolish AFDC. We create a temporary employment assistance program. We change the culture of welfare offices from eligibility workers to being empowerment workers. Instead of only fussbudgeting over eligibility rules, social workers now become empowerment workers to sit down with welfare applicants to do a job readiness assessment on what it takes to move them to a job, stay on a job, and ensure that their children's education and health needs are being met.

Everyone must sign a parent empowerment contract within 2 weeks of entering the welfare system. It is an individualized plan to get a job. The failure of individuals to sign that contract means they cannot get benefits. Everyone must undertake an immediate and intensive job search once they have signed that contract. We believe the best job training is on the job. Your first job leads you to the next job. Each time you climb a little bit further

out of poverty and at the same time we reward that effort.

Yes, this is a tough plan with tough requirements. It expects responsibility from welfare recipients. Everyone must do something for benefits. If you do not sign the contract, you lose the benefits. If you refuse to accept a job that is offered, you lose the benefits. If, after 2 years of assistance, you do not have a job in the private sector, then one must be provided for you in the public sector.

No adult can get benefits for more than 5 years in their adult lifetime, but if you are a minor, you are able to stay in school and receive benefits.

So, yes, we Democrats are very tough on work. Everyone must work. Assistance is time limited and everyone must do something for benefits. If you do not abide by the contract, then you lose your benefits.

What else do we do? We provide a safety net for children. We not only want you to be job ready and work force ready, we want you to be a responsible parent. We want you to be able to ensure that as part of getting your benefits, your children are in school and that they are receiving health care.

Once you do go to work, we will not abandon you. We want to make sure that a dollar's worth of work is worth a dollar's worth of welfare, and while you are working at a minimum wage, trying to better yourself, we will provide a safety net for child care for your children, nutritional benefits will continue, and so will health care. We want to be sure that while you are trying to help yourself, we are helping your children grow into responsible adults.

I do not mind telling people that they must work because I do not mind telling them that they will not only have the tools to go to work, but that there will be a safety net for children.

This is what the Republican bill does not do. It does not look at the day-to-day lives of real people and ask what is needed to get that person into a job.

People are telling to go to work are not going to be in high-paid, high-technology jobs. We know that that mother who wants to sign a contract that requires her to work will be on the edge when it comes to paying the bills.

She does not have a mother or an aunt or a next door neighbor to watch her kids. She needs help with child care to move into the work force.

The Republican bill does not provide enough money to pay for real child care. Suppose that mother lives in suburban Maryland or Baltimore city or the rural parts of my State? She does the right thing; she gets about an entry-level, minimum-wage job.

She is going to make about \$9,000 a year, but will have no benefits. She might take home, after Social Security taxes, \$175 a week. But if her child care costs her \$125 a week, that leaves her \$50 a week for rent, food, and clothing.

So that means, under the Republican welfare bill, it is like jumping off of a